United Nations A/52/PV.37

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

37th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 28 October 1997, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/52/350/Add.5)

The President: I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/52/350/Add.5. In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 16 and 29 September and 6, 8 and 14 October 1997, Togo has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/456)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.9)

The President: The conclusion, on 24 July 1996, of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is the oldest of all the parliamentary organizations, signified a very encouraging development which, to my mind, will continue to acquire ever-growing importance. Moreover, the agreement is very attuned to the spirit of the ongoing United Nations reform and thus should be further strengthened.

During the current session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/7 of 25 October 1996, we will have to elaborate further steps for the practical implementation of that agreement. There is no doubt that our discussion will concentrate on, among other things, the issue of providing this cooperation with a modern and adequate framework.

I now call on the representative of Spain to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.9.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since this is the first time that I am addressing the General Assembly at this session, may I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to its presidency. I hope that you will continue to show throughout this session the excellent leadership that you have exercised over our work during these first weeks.

It is a source of great satisfaction for me to address this meeting of the General Assembly under agenda item 29 to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.9 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

97-86326 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

This draft resolution is sponsored by 88 delegations, which is solid testimony to the importance that Member States accord to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In addition to the Member States listed in the draft resolution, other States have joined the list of co-sponsors: Burkina Faso, Gabón, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Niger, San Marino, Singapore, Jamaica, Chad, Kuwait, Turkmenistan and Djibouti.

There is no doubt that cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union has grown significantly since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement on 24 July 1996, leading to the joint undertaking of various activities by the two organizations. The preambular paragraphs of draft resolution A/52/L.9 echo these positive developments, which are set out in detail in the timely report (A/52/456) submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 51/7, which was adopted by the Assembly last year without a vote.

Both the Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Seoul last April and the session in Cairo in September attest to these positive developments. In Cairo, a member of the Spanish Parliament, Mr. Miguel Angel Martínez, succeeded an illustrious Egyptian, Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, as President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, whose Executive Committee is currently composed of members of the Parliaments of the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Jordan, Iceland, India, Estonia, Argentina, Italy, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Poland and the Russian Federation.

For all these reasons, as well as the strengthened cooperation endeavours between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Pierre Cornillon, and the members of their staffs, for their efforts in support of this cooperation.

Draft resolution A/52/L.9 recalls in its preamble the importance of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In its operative part, it notes with appreciation the increased cooperation between the two organizations; recommends that this cooperation be further strengthened, at a time when the United Nations is preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century; requests the Secretary-General to submit a further report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session; and decides to include this item in the provisional agenda of its next session.

Therefore, and since the draft resolution has no budgetary implications, I would like to propose, on behalf of all the co-sponsors, that the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.9 be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Ahamed (India): It is a great privilege to speak in support of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations. The important initial step of establishing a framework of cooperation between the two organizations, with the conclusion of the cooperation agreement on 24 July 1996, has opened up important new possibilities of mutually beneficial cooperation. That the signature of this agreement was followed in quick succession by the conclusion by the IPU of similar cooperation agreements with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is adequate testimony to the validity of the principles underlying the need for closer interaction between the IPU and the United Nations and its specialized agencies. We need to pool our resources and our experience to devise common plans of action to address our shared concerns.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union includes representatives of the people, untrammelled by their affiliations to a particular political ideology or belief. They come from both the Government and the opposition, providing a unique flavour to our deliberations. The Union thus represents, better than many other forums, the diverse will of the people in the true sense of the term.

The Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/52/456, has stated that parliamentarians are a key group and that national parliaments have a major role to play in the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations. I would like to express my full support for this statement and to assure the Secretary- General that the parliamentarians are alive and responsive to the concerns of humankind. They will contribute to ensure effective implementation of the goals of United Nations conferences and summits and the shared goals of creating a world characterized by diminishing injustice and increasing happiness, and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The possibilities of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU are enormous. Some of them have been detailed by the Secretary-General in his report and deserve our commendation. Our cooperation for the promotion of peace and security, and for the promotion of democracy and to follow up on major United Nations conferences and summits, must be intensified and enriched to the benefit of humankind. Promotion of democracy at all levels is the key area in which the experience of the IPU could be effectively utilized by the United Nations and its specialized agencies or funds and programmes. The recent adoption by the IPU of a Universal Declaration on Democracy at its meeting in Cairo in September earlier this year could guide our common endeavours.

Full participation of women in all aspects of economic and social life of our peoples and their political empowerment is one of the guarantees of democracy. As a country devoted to social uplift, India has enacted significant socially emancipating legislation, including reservation of one third of the seats in locally elected municipal and village-level bodies, the *panchayats*, through constitutional amendment. This has brought to the fore a critical body of women, more than a million strong, which is now taking charge not only of the lives of their families, but also of entire villages and municipalities in my country.

India also organized a specialized conference of the IPU on partnership between men and women in politics in New Delhi from 14 to 18 February 1997. It brought together an equal number of men and women from over 80 parliaments and intensified our efforts to highlight gender issues, particularly in the political sphere.

I recall the message to the Conference by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who said that the Conference

> "marks an admirable step forward in our joint efforts towards a goal we all share: achieving the equality of women and men in politics, in decision-making and in all other realms of human endeavour".

My delegation is therefore happy to note that the specialized conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union hosted by India has been followed by other joint initiatives of the United Nations and the IPU in this field. The invitation extended by the Commission on the Status of Women to the President of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians to its 1997 session, as a part of a panel on women in decision-making, deserves to be commended. The utilization by the United Nations of the database of women in politics, prepared for the New Delhi Conference, is also a welcome step in our mutually enriching cooperation.

A word about the interaction between the IPU and the United Nations. India has always believed that participation of members of Parliament — from both the Government and the opposition parties — in the meetings, conferences and summits of the United Nations is necessary to impart to the United Nations the diverse will of "we the peoples" that the United Nations represents. Indian delegations to all regular and special sessions of the General Assembly, as well as to the conferences organized by the United Nations, have included members of our Parliament. In addition, our Parliament also takes an active interest in the deliberations of the international community in this forum and promotes national legislation for the social and economic betterment of our people in line with international deliberations, in particular the World Summit for Social Development.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU requires for its continued success an effective, vibrant, modern and reformed United Nations, responsive to the concerns of the vast majority of its Members, the developing countries. We are therefore supportive of the recent measures that the international community is considering to revitalize and strengthen the United Nations. However, reforms cannot be a substitute for the provision of adequate resources to the United Nations to carry out its mandated tasks. They cannot be simply a cost-cutting exercise. In this context, I recall that several conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union have called on the international community to provide the United Nations with the requisite financial, human and technical resources. We hope that these will soon be forthcoming.

To conclude, may I once again express my delegation's happiness at the present stage of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. I hope that this cooperation will be further intensified and strengthened in the coming years. India will be willing to play its part in the process in the belief that it is not only our endeavour and our commitment, but also our duty, to strengthen a better and prosperous global society through strengthened international cooperation for development. It is in this context that I commend to the Assembly the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.9 and sponsored by a large number of our delegations.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): My delegation is a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In this regard, I endorse the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Spain as he introduced the draft resolution under consideration.

Let me begin my brief intervention by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General for document A/52/456, which provides a clear account of the concrete activities of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

We can see from that report that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is actively promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at the regional, subregional and international levels. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is made up of elected representatives of the peoples of the world, is, in a significant way, helping to bring the ideals of the United Nations closer to the world communities. This is all the more true given the fact that national delegations to various meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union draw representation from both governing and opposition parties.

In his concluding remarks in document A/52/456, the Secretary-General has rightly observed that the Parliamentarians are a key group within the constituencies that are acquiring growing importance to the United Nations and which warrant special consideration. The Secretary-General goes on to conclude that the Inter-Parliamentary Union has a major role to play in the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations. Against that background, it is the hope of my delegation that the draft resolution before us will meet with the unanimous approval of this Assembly.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a privilege for me to take the floor in connection with the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in support of the advancement and deepening of a process that is opening up new prospects for international cooperation.

May I express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez of Spain, for their efforts to strengthen and intensify the relationship between the two organizations. I wish to extend this appreciation also to the Republic of Egypt for its continued outstanding contributions in that respect.

The signing of the agreement between the two organizations on 24 July 1996 made possible the establishment of a definite starting point for a growing cooperation between both organizations, which will bring us closer to the purposes and objectives of both organizations. The goal is to embark on a path that will lead to the strengthening of the United Nations and contribute to the consolidation of democracy within States — issues to which Argentina attaches special importance.

In that connection, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which outlines Inter-Parliamentary Union support on important issues. This includes good offices in Cyprus and support for activities towards the worldwide prohibition of anti-personnel landmines. In the sphere of the promotion of democracy, we are pleased to note that the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been providing the United Nations with increasing support in the form of technical assistance and advisory services for national parliaments.

Such cooperation also encompasses follow-up to major United Nations conferences. The Inter-Parliamentary Union participated in the preparations for and the holding of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the 1997 meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Based on a 1996 study carried out by the IPU, the General Assembly has been given a worldwide assessment of parliamentary action on the implementation of Agenda 21.

Draft resolution A/52/L.9 is perfectly in keeping with an international scenario geared towards the goals of representative democracy and the parliamentary movement. For all those reasons, Argentina has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution just introduced so lucidly and eloquently by the representative of Spain and supported by the representatives of India and of Zambia. We are convinced that in this way we can contribute to furthering the common ideals that unite the international community.

Mr. Yakovlev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The purposes set out in the statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) — to unite parliamentarians to secure the broad participation of States in the strengthening of international peace and security, in the firm establishment of representative institutions and in the defence of human rights — are

largely consonant with the aspirations of the United Nations.

The relationship between the two organizations is a long-standing one. For years, IPU representatives have taken an active part in major events of the United Nations and of bodies in the United Nations system. The annual New York meetings of parliamentarians members of delegations to the General Assembly have become a good tradition and have opened up a new dimension in the dialogue with the United Nations. We applaud such contacts at other major international events organized by the United Nations, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing. Feedback too is important; here I cite the increasing number of international and regional meetings of parliamentarians with the participation of specialized agencies of the United Nations.

The cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, signed in July 1996, marked a new stage in the relationship between these two authoritative international organizations and gave powerful impetus to their efforts to improve and broaden their cooperation. This is particularly important given the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations, one important area of which is the strengthening of cooperation between the Organization and civil society. The IPU can make a contribution to this process as well.

Among the areas of practical interaction between the two organization is in the provision by the United Nations of technical assistance and consultative services to the national parliaments of countries that require such assistance. The close contacts between the IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are beginning to yield concrete results, and I note that the UNDP is providing financial support to the IPU for its programmes to encourage effective governance. We can expect similar results in the light of recent agreements between the IPU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Human rights, the environment, drugs, armed conflict and other challenges to State and individual security are the focus of attention both in the United Nations and in forums of the IPU.

The 100th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, to be held in 1998 in Russia, will be no exception. This is the first time the Conference is being held in our country, and Russian parliamentarians expect important new initiatives to enhance links and cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. The fact that the Conference is to take place on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be an important catalyst for ideas and proposals, in heightening our sense of responsibility for protecting the value of the human person, and in ensuring security for all individuals. That was the thrust of the decisions taken at the recent Cairo Inter-Parliamentary Conference.

The association of the IPU with the main areas of United Nations activities is having a good effect also on regional and subregional interaction among parliaments. The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which meets regularly at Saint Petersburg, has provided experience in questions that have taken on high priority for the United Nations. Despite its relative youth, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly has proven itself as an active participant in international processes and as an organization that can make a real contribution to resolving serious problems of peace and security, including efforts to eliminate pockets of tension in Abkhazia, the Transdniestr region and Nagorny Karabakh.

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS has drawn up and adopted model procedural and executive penal codes and model legislation for combatting organized crime. This clearly shows that the CIS is implementing the relevant recommendations of the United Nations. The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly is establishing and developing contacts with other inter-parliamentary organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Nordic Council.

Saint Petersburg, traditionally known as the northern capital of Russia, is preparing to celebrate its 300th anniversary. It continues to play its historical role in bringing together peoples and cultures. Its citizens are not indifferent to efforts to combat one of the most terrible of threats: the threat to the environment, one which is difficult to discern at first but which is horrific in its consequences. It requires the immediate formulation and implementation of a whole set of measures that can prevent the destruction of all life on Earth.

As the Governor of Saint Petersburg, I wish to inform the Assembly of my city's new "Green Helmets" programme, which includes the establishment of specialized units to combat ecological dangers. This, we think, is not only an urgent task, but also the moral duty of mankind.

Ms. Ramiro-Lopez (Philippines): Last year, during the fifty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/7 which, among other things, welcomed the conclusion on 24 July 1996 of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). That agreement brought to fruition the longstanding desire of my Government, and that of others as well, to strengthen, increase and formalize cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.

The cooperation agreement has proven to be an important step towards opening up new areas of cooperation, complementarity and mutually reinforcing action between the United Nations and the IPU to address global problems. It also reaffirms the IPU's continuing support and affirmation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and the need to promote international cooperation in meeting the global challenges of humankind.

In this regard, the cooperation agreement has proven to be a catalyst for United Nations-IPU cooperation, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on this item which was requested in resolution 51/7. Cooperation has been expanded to key global issues such as international peace and security, promotion of representative democracy and follow-up to major United Nations conferences on development issues. The Philippines was particularly pleased at the support given by the IPU to efforts to secure a worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines.

The IPU, in its recent Cairo meeting, also adopted recommendations for parliamentary action with regard to child labour, commercial and other forms of sexual exploitation of children, and the protection of children in armed conflict. These will undoubtedly contribute to United Nations and country efforts in combating these matters. The IPU, through various proposals and activities, has also reinforced United Nations efforts to promote the status of women and their participation in political life.

The recent actions I have cited serve as important illustrations of the fact that United Nations-IPU cooperation has great potential in addressing key areas of global concern.

The increasingly important role of civil society in promoting international cooperation should also be promoted through the vehicle of United Nations-IPU cooperation. For what better way can the will of the people be expressed at the international level and in the United Nations than through the IPU, which consists of representatives elected by the people? At the same time, what better way than through the IPU is there of disseminating issues considered by the United Nations to the grassroots level? These are not rhetorical questions but, rather, a view that I hope will soon be injected into the mainstream discussions on global issues and problems.

Finally, the Philippines strongly supports enhancing United Nations-IPU cooperation, and we recommend to the General Assembly the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on this item, of which my country is a co-sponsor.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): It gives me great pleasure to address agenda item 29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is an organization of national parliaments which represent their people within the structure of a State. With its membership of no less than 137 national parliaments from every region of the world and a wide spectrum of legislatures, the IPU represents a broad range of the world's collective public opinion.

As we all know, the members of national parliaments enact national laws and supervise the activities of their Governments. As States become more and more interdependent, parliaments are playing an increasingly important role in the formulation of national and foreign policies, including those dealing with international cooperation. They deliberate on treaties, incorporate international laws into the national legal system, and influence the conduct of their Governments' foreign policies.

Since its foundation in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has made an invaluable contribution to the spread of representative democracy and the promotion of peace throughout the world. Its activities have sought to maintain peace, to strengthen democracy, and to promote human rights and freedoms, all of which are also the goals of the United Nations.

With such like-minded objectives, my delegation believes it is only natural that the IPU and the United Nations should seek closer cooperation with one another. Together, both organizations carry enormous weight in international affairs, and closer coordination between them will only improve their efficiency and their ability to reach those common goals.

Since the parliamentarians are in constant contact with the citizens they represent, we also believe that closer United Nations-IPU collaboration can do much to ensure that the will of the people is clearly expressed at the international level.

In this respect, we are pleased to note that over the past year there has been considerable progress in the efforts of both organizations to seek closer ties of cooperation. We particularly welcome the agreements reached by the IPU with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/52/456). It is our hope that inter-institutional coordination can be further strengthened through the conclusion of additional such agreements between the IPU and other members of the United Nations family.

As we are all aware, the United Nations is in the process of making strenuous efforts to adapt itself so as to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century more effectively. Last July, the Secretary-General put forward his proposals for United Nations reform in document A/51/950. In that document, the Secretary-General emphasized that the parliamentarians are a key constituency of growing importance to the United Nations.

We share that view, and we are convinced that national parliamentarians working together at the international level have a major role to play in helping to realize the goals of the United Nations. We believe that the international community should bear in mind the need for mobilizing the political will of parliamentarians as the deliberations on United Nations reform continue.

In this context, it is worth noting that the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held last April in Seoul recognized the need for national parliaments to support actions to be taken by the United Nations through its adoption of a resolution entitled "Cooperation for world and regional security and stability, as well as for respect for all forms of the sovereignty and independence of States".

Furthermore, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/52/456, many of the other resolutions adopted in Seoul — on sustainable development, the implementation of Agenda 21, and regional conflicts — also stressed the importance of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations in dealing with pressing global issues.

Indeed, the issue of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations was one of the underlying themes over the course of the one week session of the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, which brought together in Seoul 572 members of parliament from 118 countries and representatives from 25 observer delegations. We welcome the clear statements made by both the United Nations and the IPU of their intentions to strengthen the cooperation between them, and we look forward to those intentions coming to full fruition.

My delegation is pleased to sponsor the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". We look forward to its adoption by consensus by the General Assembly. Finally, allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the delegation of Spain for the leading role it has played in submitting this important draft resolution.

Mrs. Ben Yedder (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Since its establishment at a difficult period of time, the United Nations has worked tirelessly for peace. It has also helped to pave the way for national liberation movements in every region of the world. It has directed much of its work towards economic and social development and the improvement of standards of living. In order better to respond to the demands of the international community, the United Nations has constantly reformed itself in order to discharge its lofty mission as an agent for change and progress for the nations and peoples of the world.

The aspiration to universality and the all-encompassing nature of the mandate of the United Nations make it a unique and indispensable forum, giving Governments the opportunity of working together to undertake common endeavours to mobilize the energies and resources necessary to implement the actions agreed upon. The power of the Organization to bring people together has produced outstanding results in the most diverse areas, including trade and development, the environment, human rights, the progressive development and codification of international law, equality of the sexes

and equality within the population, peace and security, and disarmament.

The Organization has strengthened its presence through the creation of specialized bodies on which it has conferred a responsibility to support international efforts to combat illiteracy, poverty and disease, thereby consolidating the foundations of international peace and cooperation and opening up the best routes to bring progress in all its dimensions within reach of all the peoples who seek it. This approach has been reflected in the conventions, acts and agreements that the United Nations has brought about in various fields, with a variety of intergovernmental organizations, international institutions and regional organizations.

It is in this context that I pay tribute to the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the cooperation agreement concluded by them less than two years ago, on 24 July 1996. Our consideration of agenda item 29 on cooperation between this intergovernmental organization — the Inter-Parliamentary Union — and the universal Organization gives me a welcome opportunity to refer in this Assembly to some of the positive steps taken by both organizations in this framework in the domains of the promotion of peace and security, the promotion of representative democracy and, finally, the follow-up to major United Nations conferences.

With regard to the promotion of peace and security, the first aspect to which I will refer relates to the substantive contribution of the IPU to United Nations efforts for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. To that end, throughout 1996 and this year, the IPU has considered the steps it might take to help ban these mines and conclude a treaty binding on all States members in this area. The IPU has also continued its efforts at the parliamentary level to help in the pacification and normalization of conflict situations in many countries where civil peace has been seriously disrupted, whether in Albania or the countries of Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has at the same time continued, as in the past, closely to follow the situation in Cyprus. But the area in which the IPU has made the most obvious contribution is doubtless that of the promotion of representative democracy. To this effect, the Union has been cooperating by providing technical assistance to the United Nations to help the parliaments of developing countries to strengthen their structures, in Africa as well as in Asia and Latin America. In 1997, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the IPU sponsored a Parliamentarians' Forum that brought together members of parliaments from some 75 countries. At its last general conference, which was held in Cairo from 11 to 16 September 1997, the Union contributed to the efforts of the United Nations to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Specifically, this took the form of a resolution calling for measures to provide support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This text also called upon parliaments to ensure the ratification of international and regional human rights instruments. The parliamentarians undertook to work to harmonize national legislation with the standards contained in international instruments with a view to their full implementation.

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Cairo provided a good opportunity to adopt recommendations to protect children in armed conflicts. The focus of the meeting was directed to important questions relating to children, such as child labour and the exploitation of children. In the same crucial area of the promotion of representative democracy, the IPU has also just adopted a Universal Declaration on Democracy. This sets out the basic principles of democracy, as well as standards for the exercise of democratic government.

The third area on which parliamentarians focused their interest in 1997 was that of follow-up to major United Nations conferences. I am pleased to note in this regard that the activities of national parliaments in this area are in keeping with the focus of the United Nations. Indeed, at its nineteenth special session, devoted to the consideration of Agenda 21, the General Assembly stressed that in order to promote participatory processes in the area of economic and social development, the participation of national legislative assemblies was indispensable. In this area, we can only welcome the contribution made by parliamentarians at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, and the various events that resulted from it. In 1996, the United Nations and the IPU took joint measures to follow up and implement the texts that emerged from the World Summit for Social Development. To this end, in September 1996, UNDP and the IPU organized a meeting in New York during which participants identified priority measures to address poverty eradication, the attainment of full employment and social integration.

Another important area I should like to mention is the promotion of women and the participation of women

in political life. Parliamentarians played an active role during the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women, with many activities, focusing on, *inter alia*, the participation of women in political parties and electoral processes and their role in national parliaments.

More recently, on the occasion of the World Food Summit in 1997, the Inter-Parliamentary Union held a Parliamentarians' Day meeting, organized jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It dealt basically with the lack of food security, its root causes and follow-up to the outcome of the Summit. The Union adopted a Declaration in support of the Summit and announced that it intended to set up a mechanism for parliamentary follow-up of the commitments made in Rome.

The increasingly active participation by parliamentary representatives in international affairs, which I have already outlined, is constantly gaining strength and being reinforced along the lines established by the United Nations in order to lend new impetus to the participation of civil society in international activities. This interest is reflected in a tangible way through the resolutions adopted by the IPU at its recent Cairo session — resolutions which cover the strengthening of links between parliament and the people to ensure sustainable democracy and subjects as diverse and crucial as jobs and globalization, the protection of children, the principles and elements of universal democracy and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

My country is proud to take an active part in the work of the IPU. We strongly support cooperation between it and the United Nations, and we are happy today to see the new dynamism that the Union has given to its relationship with the United Nations family, a dynamism reflected in the increase in cooperation agreements between the IPU and the specialized agencies. I refer here to the recent agreements concluded with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

We agree with the Secretary-General's statement in his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union that national parliaments through the IPU

> "have a major role to play in the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations" (*A/52/456, para. 20*).

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Italy is among the sponsors of the draft resolution before us, and wishes to add its voice to those who have already expressed strong support for this document. The draft notes with appreciation the increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and recommends that this cooperation be further strengthened at a time when the United Nations is preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Permanent Representative of Spain, Ambassador Inocencio Arias, introduced the draft resolution in the most clear and comprehensive way. We are particularly grateful to him for having succeeded in collecting about a hundred sponsors — 15 more than last year. Given this high, extraordinarily large number of sponsors, we are confident that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The report (A/52/456) of the Secretary-General, submitted pursuant to last year's resolution, indicates that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has been even more strengthened since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement on 24 July 1996. The report also gives several examples where the two organizations now undertake joint and mutually reinforcing action, particularly in the fields of the maintenance of peace and security, promotion of representative democracy and follow-up to major United Nations Conferences. Italy welcomes these developments. National parliaments are called on to play an ever- increasing role in international cooperation. We must never forget that the ideals of democracy that Parliaments embody should inspire and govern relations not only within States, but also between States. Italy is particularly attached to this value, and sees the IPU as a key organization in affirming democracy in today's international community, as well as, of course, within the United Nations system.

We note with deep appreciation the results of the IPU Conference held in Seoul in April 1997. On that occasion, the IPU adopted a number of important resolutions dealing with United Nations matters, in particular, security issues and emergency situations, such as those prevailing at the time in Albania and the then Zaire. Moreover, we would like to praise the IPU's support for the campaign to secure a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines.

With regard to the promotion of representative democracy, the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has already produced highly significant results, especially in the areas of the participation of women in political life — and we were delighted that

several ladies addressed the Assembly today — provision of technical assistance and advisory services to parliaments, good governance and the protection of human rights. In this latter respect, the IPU meeting in Cairo last September was particularly important, since it set the basis for concrete initiatives aimed at ensuring prompt ratification by parliaments of international and regional human rights treaties, national implementation of international human rights standards and the protection of children. Moreover, the IPU adopted in Cairo a Universal Declaration on Democracy, which contains the basic elements for the exercise of democratic government, and addresses the international dimension of democracy.

The record of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the follow-up to major United Nations conferences is equally impressive. It shows how much the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations can benefit both institutions. The report of the Secretary-General recalls the various IPU initiatives aimed at fostering the implementation of the results of the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the 1997 World Food Summit, held in Rome. Parliaments were encouraged to adopt legislation to comply with the commitments made at these conferences, and mechanisms were set up to monitor parliamentary action in the areas concerned. Needless to say, this is an invaluable contribution by the IPU to United Nations activities and, ultimately, to reaffirming and implementing the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the full support of Italy for the action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the further increase of its cooperation with the United Nations, based on last year's agreement. The ideals of freedom and democracy, of which parliaments are the highest expression, remain the best guarantee of this partnership's lasting success.

Mr. Elbaradei (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): For the third year in a row, the General Assembly is debating agenda item 29, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", in order to consider the contributions that have been and will be made by the two organizations. The aim is to promote this cooperation so as to ensure active participation by all parliaments in supporting the United Nations in all its fields of activity, whether political, social or humanitarian, as well as in peacekeeping operations, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building.

I am pleased to congratulate Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez on his election as President of the IPU Council during the successful IPU Council meeting held in Cairo. I wish him success in his presidency, and hope he will achieve optimum cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. I also wish to pay tribute to Mr. Ahmed Sorour, Speaker of the Egyptian Parliament, for his constructive efforts during his term of office as President of the IPU Council in supporting its activities, and especially for his initiative of laying down the cornerstone for cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU — the subject we are considering today.

Furthermore, I wish to recognize the untiring efforts of Mr. Pierre Cornillon, Secretary-General of the IPU, to enhance the performance of the IPU and to expand and deepen its cooperation with the United Nations system.

In its resolution 51/7 of 25 October 1996, the General Assembly welcomed the cooperation agreement concluded between the United Nations and the IPU and considered that the signature of the agreement represented an important step for increased and strengthened cooperation between the two organizations. The report of the Secretary-General on this item (document A/52/456) shows that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has been strengthened since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement, and the ensuing period has witnessed several examples where the two organizations now undertake joint and mutually reinforcing action.

Before I speak to the substantive aspects of the report, I wish to express the appreciation of the delegation of Egypt to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his comprehensive report on this item, and for his unremitting efforts towards promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. Let me pay tribute as well to the efforts made by his predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to develop the general framework of this cooperation through the agreement on cooperation between the two organizations.

During the Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Seoul in April this year, discussions were held on security matters in general and their relation to the promotion of international peace and security, and on emergency cases in Albania and the then Zaire, the Cyprus problem, peacekeeping operations in Haiti and the global banning of anti-personnel landmines. These are all vivid examples of the potentialities of effective cooperation between the two organizations. Since the IPU

has taken the initiative to discuss these issues and has lent its support to the United Nations in these areas, in our view it is important that the IPU continue to support the United Nations with regard to other issues, especially those chronic problems where conflicts within a single nation preclude the United Nations from playing its due role — in Afghanistan and Somalia, for example — and other issues. Such issues would undoubtedly benefit from participation by the parliamentarians in their settlement and thereby facilitate the role of the United Nations in the performance of its mandate.

In the same context, the adoption by the IPU Conference held in Cairo in September 1997 of five major documents aimed at supporting the activities of the United Nations is a move that stresses the concept of cooperation between the two organizations. The Universal Declaration on Democracy, based on a joint study conducted by the IPU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and a panel of international experts, is indeed an inter-parliamentary precedent that deserves to be built on. The same goes for the adoption by the IPU Council of resolutions recommending parliamentary action to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The IPU has called upon parliaments to provide support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and also recommends parliamentary action regarding child labour, commercial as well as sexual exploitation of children, and the protection of children in armed conflict. All of these resolutions are geared towards supporting the activities of the United Nations in these areas.

The efforts by the IPU in the areas of environment, development, food and agriculture, social development, and the advancement of women also show that we are embarking upon a broad array of areas of cooperation between the two organizations. Such cooperation should be strengthened and utilized with a view to the attainment of the common goals of the two organizations.

Last year, we participated in the IPU meeting held at the time of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. A key theme was the efforts of the United Nations in the promotion of democracy.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The IPU held another meeting last July on sound management in the interests of democracy and justice. If by our presence here we stand as clear symbols of democratic action in all our countries, it would indeed be difficult for us to speak of these issues that relate to democracy when we feel that the place that is acting as host to our meeting, which represents all nations of the world, itself lacks democratic practices, especially in one of its primary bodies, namely, the Security Council. Here, we are have serious concern with regard to some of its resolutions, resolutions that lack the criteria of democracy owing either to the lack of balanced representation of all the world's continents, or to the use of the veto power which we have seen exercised or threatened, counter to the unanimity among other Council members.

We all know that the United Nations has no power to act other than within the provisions of its Charter. We therefore call on all Member States to seriously consider the possibility of amending the Charter in order to conform to the international circumstances of today which diverge completely from those which prevailed at the time of adopting the present Charter. Such amendment would serve to put an end to the frustrations felt by the peoples of the world who find that practices which are devoid of democratic norms rob of their substance the noble goals around which they have rallied to establish the United Nations. Consequently, the credibility of the decisions and performances of the United Nations, the largest of international organizations, will be missing.

Furthermore, we, as parliamentarians, view with grave concern the non-implementation of the principles and standards provided by the United Nations Charter with regard to breaches of international peace and security, in a manner characterized by justice and objectivity, that is without applying selectivity and double standards in dealing with similar cases. This is one of the extremely sore points that have harmed the credibility of the international Organization over the past few years. We are aware that the challenges facing the United Nations have recently multiplied and diversified. In addition to international instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and environmental spheres, there is an increase in areas of tension and conflict both among States and within States. Outbreaks of ethnic, tribal and factional conflicts, the heightened threats of the weapons of mass destruction, the spread of terrorism and the increase of its scope, as an international phenomenon — all endanger democracy, human rights and international peace and security.

Given that proliferation of challenges, the parliaments of the world must manifest their concern with the issues on the agenda of the United Nations, such as disarmament, development, the protection of women and children, the protection of the environment, as well as special problems relating to reform of the United Nations and the ways and means for Governments to contribute to dealing with those problems.

In addition, it is incumbent upon parliaments of States that have not fully paid their financial obligations to the United Nations to take action aimed at the fulfilment of these obligations on time and without conditions, so that the United Nations may carry out its tasks.

Moreover, I specifically propose that "challenges facing the United Nations and how to deal with them" be the topic of discussions in all the world parliaments this year. This would cause members of these parliaments to press their Governments to make additional efforts to assist in facing these challenges. Such a debate would undeniably have great importance in strengthening public opinion in favour of United Nations efforts aimed at the attainment of its goals.

The Egyptian Parliament recognizes the importance of strengthening the role of the United Nations in all areas of its operations. Notwithstanding the concerns I have expressed with regard to certain aspects of the United Nations work as members of the Egyptian Parliament, we shall always stand squarely behind all efforts aimed at enhancing the United Nations effectiveness and making it more democratic.

Ms. Tan (Singapore): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Singapore delegation on this agenda item, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/52/456). I would also like to thank Mr. Inocencio Arias of Spain for introducing draft resolution A/52/L.9.

More than a year after the signing of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on 24 July 1996, my delegation is pleased to note that significant progress has been made in strengthening the cooperation between the two organizations. The list of concrete steps and actions elaborated in the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is impressive. We are especially pleased that cooperation has extended to action in favour of the participation of women in political life, which is at the core of the IPU's work to promote representative democracy. Another new area of cooperation which we welcome is the increasing support received by the United Nations from the IPU in the provision of technical assistance and advisory services to parliaments at the request of national Governments.

As the IPU is an organization with a membership of 135 national parliaments, it is not surprising that it has sought closer participation with the United Nations. The ties between the two organizations, particularly in the areas of peace, human rights and democracy, date back to the establishment of the United Nations itself. On the basis of the shared objectives of the United Nations and the IPU, closer cooperation would only facilitate the work of parliamentarians and empower the work of the United Nations.

The key to United Nations-IPU cooperation is complementarity. The United Nations recognizes that it is not a world government. After all, its mandates are determined and its resources furnished by its Member States. Yet the United Nations has successfully established international law and set international standards and programmes in almost every field of human conduct.

However, sovereign power remains with individual nation States. Within nation States, decisions hitherto made by the Executive increasingly need the endorsement of the elected representatives of the people. The views of the people can no longer be ignored. The member national parliaments of the IPU, therefore, decide for their respective nations whether to assume binding international obligations and how to implement at the national level the decisions which States have taken at the international level. In my delegation's view, the task of exercising sovereign power should only be exercised by parliamentarians, that is, men and women elected by the people of each nation, those who are in direct contact with the general population, who are in touch with their shared aspirations and understand their common interests and needs.

One area where the active participation of parliamentarians is needed is in the debate on the financial situation of the United Nations. In preparing the United Nations for the challenges of the twenty-first century and in support of the Secretary-General's reform package, the financial problems of the United Nations need to be addressed with great urgency. It has been

repeated time and again that the key reason for this is the failure of some Member States to pay their dues in full and on time. One reason that has been offered for the inability of Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations is that domestic political bodies do not support their current share of the United Nations budget. We believe that through greater contact and collaboration between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union parliamentarians will be in a better position to explain to the public the issues involved so as to garner popular support for international action. This would address the problem of justifying the resources needed for international cooperation through the United Nations.

The IPU's increased participation and collaboration with the United Nations would make the United Nations more representative, as the parliaments represent the will of the people of every nation. We believe that it is only through a productive collaborative relationship between the United Nations and the IPU that the will of the people can be better expressed at the international level through the United Nations — and, conversely, through the IPU, the voice of the intergovernmental process can be disseminated to the grass-roots level. This is a win-win situation that we fully support and encourage.

In closing, my delegation is pleased to announce its decision to sponsor draft resolution A/52/L.9 and commend to the Assembly that the draft be unanimously adopted.

Mr. Ghafoor (Pakistan): The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations share a common interest in collective efforts for the realization of the lofty ideals of the United Nations Charter.

Today, the United Nations stands at the crossroads of its history. During the first half century of its existence, the Organization saw many ups and downs. It now confronts major challenges as it prepares itself for the twenty-first century.

The United Nations is entitled to take pride in making invaluable contributions in a number of crucial areas, such as peacekeeping, economic development, humanitarian assistance and the establishment of legal norms. However, it is disheartening to see that this world Organization has not been able to live up to the expectations of the people of the world.

Despite its shortcomings, the United Nations remains the beacon of hopes and aspirations for people all over the world. The people continue to look up to the United Nations in their quest not only to rid the world of the scourge of war, but also to create the economic, social and human conditions under which all human beings can aspire to better standards of life in greater freedom.

As a representative body of the people of the world, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has an important role to play in the realization of a world free of the scourge of war, hunger, poverty and disease. To achieve this goal, the IPU and the United Nations should actively and fully utilize the framework for cooperation between the two organizations.

Parliamentarians can sensitize the United Nations about the expectations of the people they represent. For some, the United Nations has not achieved the goal of peace and security and stability. In certain regions of the world, it has not been successful in ameliorating the people's sufferings. Lack of action in Bosnia reinforced doubts about the ability of the Organization in dealing with conflicts.

In our own region, the Kashmir dispute is still simmering. The people of Kashmir are still waiting for the United Nations to take measures to implement Security Council resolutions.

At this juncture, when the United Nations is preparing to meet the challenges of the future, cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations can help in realizing the hopes and aspirations of the people of the world. Close cooperation between the two organizations will greatly help in harnessing the power of the people for the realization of the objectives of the United Nations. It is, therefore, necessary that parliamentarians from all countries launch campaigns to create awareness among their constituencies about the role of the United Nations in today's world.

A major change over the past 50 years lies in the growth of civil society. The citizens of the world are increasingly interacting with one another on matters of international significance. To respond to the wishes of the people, the United Nations needs to become more accessible to these new actors, such as non-governmental organizations, who represent civil society. Pakistan for its part will continue to make contributions towards enhancing and expanding the interaction between the United Nations and civil society.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is uniquely placed to build bridges between the United Nations and civil

society. The IPU can mobilize public opinion in favour of the United Nations. It can also contribute to the United Nations role in the promotion of democracy, socio-economic development, peacekeeping and peace-building. In the field of peacekeeping and peace-building, the parliamentarians of major troop-contributing countries might consider the establishment of an IPU forum on United Nations peacekeeping operations that can mobilize international public opinion in support of United Nations peacekeeping endeavours.

As the United Nations prepares for the twenty-first century, a major challenge facing the Organization is to take full advantage of the revolution in informatics. The Secretary-General is to be commended for giving due priority to this task, which deserves the full support of the parliamentarians and the entire international community. The informatics revolution is indeed the revolution of our times and the greatest hope as a force multiplier at the service of development. In this regard, Pakistan takes pride in having been of assistance in moving the United Nations and its Member States further along the path of informatics and cyberspace.

In recent years, the United Nations has come under critical examination. Every organization needs constant review and self-examination and reform. The United Nations needs this perhaps more than any other organization, because it crystallizes within itself the hopes and aspirations of humanity. One must, however, keep in mind that reform of the United Nations cannot be hasty or ill-considered, nor can it be based on anything other than the broadest consensus.

The people of the world have a vested interest in the realization of the lofty ideals of the Charter of the United Nations. Together they can succeed. Let history not say that the people of the world who created this Organization did not measure up to the task of preparing it for the challenges of the future.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): I am honoured to address the General Assembly on the important item of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The basis for this cooperation is the agreement between the two organizations signed last year. That agreement provides a very useful platform for the involvement of parliaments in the work of the United Nations. I am pleased, in this connection, to be able to refer to the active role played by the Norwegian Parliament and the parliaments in the other Nordic countries in facilitating and promoting an active role for parliaments and for IPU through the cooperation agreement.

My Government has noted with great interest and satisfaction the emphasis in the reform proposals of the Secretary-General on the need to involve civil society, in its broadest sense, more actively in the work of the United Nations and we look forward to an exchange of views on how this can be achieved.

The impact of the work of the United Nations can clearly be enhanced by parliaments' playing an active role in advancing issues of international concern. The cooperation agreement reflects a promising development: the growing importance of parliaments in shaping the global agenda, *inter alia*, on such urgent issues as human rights, democratization, good governance and electoral assistance, to mention but a few. In this connection, as a very concrete example, I would like to highlight one area where parliamentarians have played a decisive role: the efforts to achieve a ban on anti-personnel landmines. It is in no small measure thanks to their efforts — the efforts of parliaments — that a number of countries, including my own, have been able to spearhead a process that will culminate in the signing, in Ottawa in December, of a convention to ban anti-personnel landmines.

The role of parliaments in all these areas is clear. They can pass legislation and allocate resources in support of such legislation. The United Nations provides vast opportunities for the sharing of experience and expertise and contributes to strengthening the role of parliaments in the collective efforts of the United Nations.

My Government hopes that the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will be strengthened in the future and that the work of both organizations will be geared towards maximizing the potential benefit to both organizations of this cooperation.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra): As one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.9, it is my pleasure today to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his personal interest in the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Indeed, as a country whose Parliament, the *Consell de la Terra*, now the *Consell General*, goes back to the year 1419 — and is thus one of the oldest parliaments in

the world — Andorra is particularly keen on fostering the collaboration between national parliaments and the Organization.

The process of reform of the United Nations is geared towards taking our Organization closer to the people. In order for the representatives of the people to be informed regularly of what happens at the United Nations, so that they can help and support the actions of the Organization, we need more contact of all sorts between our respective parliaments and the Organization. Of course, national Governments must do their share, but initiatives that can enhance dialogue between parliaments and the United Nations are not only necessary but essential.

Andorra applauds, as it did last year, the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, concluded on 24 July 1996. My country, which counts four parliamentarians as advisors in its delegation to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, will live, I can assure the Assembly, by the letter and the spirit of that agreement, in the firm conviction that only a deeper understanding by parliaments of the goals and inner workings of the United Nations will favour a true reform of the Organization and our ability, in the end, to reach the peoples we represent — the peoples mentioned at the opening of the Charter of the United Nations.

Allow me also to commend General Assembly President Hennadiy Udovenko on his personal presence here earlier today, which marks his commitment to the aims of draft resolution A/52/L.9. Allow me, since this is the first time at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly that I am taking the floor here, to congratulate him and you, Sir, on the assumption of your functions and to assure you of the Andorran support for your task during the period 1997-1998.

I wish also congratulate Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez, recently elected President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, for his new responsibilities. His illustrious record while at the Council of Europe vouches for a very successful mandate. I would also like to put in a good word for Mr. Pierre Cornillon, Secretary-General of IPU, who has always had it in heart to bring the Inter-Parliamentary Union closer to the United Nations. I believe that Mr. Cornillon is a witness to the commitment of the Andorran Parliament to IPU since its acceptance into the organization.

At the United Nations, human rights and development are central. Who is better qualified to promote, bring about and implement these goals than national parliaments, as legitimate and democratic emanations of the peoples' will and as final arbiters of budget allocations that will have clear repercussions for options of economic development? We can only gain by a closer cooperation on these issues between parliaments and Governments, between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Let us approve by consensus draft resolution A/52/L.9.

Mr. Cherginets (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Republic of Belarus, a founding Member of the United Nations and a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), is a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and IPU.

In the implementation of this draft resolution, we feel that a central element is the great opportunity it offers to coordinate the efforts of the United Nations and the parliaments of the countries of the world to resolve the global problems confronting the international community. We hope that this cooperation will facilitate the search for solutions to problems facing our countries, in particular in eliminating the consequences of the unprecedented disaster of the Chernobyl nuclear power-plant accident, which was equivalent to the detonation of 50 atomic bombs. The Republic of Belarus is now obliged to spend a third of its yearly budget to eliminate the consequences of this terrible disaster every year. We understand that our efforts in eliminating the possible consequences will also determine the security of peoples in neighbouring States. This is why both our Parliament and our President are sparing no efforts in this area.

As is well known, one of the features of international organizations is that the effectiveness of their actions depends to a significant extent upon how adequately they reflect the realities of our modern world. In our relationship with other States we accord international organizations and institutions a special role, as we believe in the full participation of Belarus in multilateral cooperation, whether interaction between inter-parliamentary and political structures, economic institutions or mechanisms for social stabilization. An important external precondition to this is the successful development of democratic processes and market reforms in our country.

The Republic of Belarus is prepared to give all kinds of assistance for the creation of favourable conditions for fruitful cooperation between such eminent international organizations as the United Nations and the

Inter-Parliamentary Union. To this end we are prepared to consider the possibility at the appropriate time of hosting one of the joint events under the aegis of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in our country to discuss the problems that confront the countries of our region, including the prevention of ecological catastrophes, the fight against organized crime, smuggling, drug trafficking, the prevention of regional conflicts, and the resolution of other questions.

I am sure you will agree that the holding of a summit of this kind would be a real contribution to the organization of the United Nations-IPU joint cooperation programme. The organization of the programme would thus also result in interaction among specific States.

We call upon the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution before it (A/52/L.9) by consensus.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.9. Before we proceed, however, I should like to announce that the following States have joined the co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Benin, Guinea, Guyana, Israel, Mali, the Marshall Islands and Nepal.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L..9?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/7).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.